Solano Family & Children's Services, Child and Adult Care Food Program

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Nutrition Nuggets

Meal Pattern Minute: Crediting Tomatoes, Avocados and Pumpkins

There are several foods that are considered fruits by botanists but are part of the vegetable component in the Child and Adult Care Food Program. Botanists classify a food as a fruit when the fleshy plant part surrounds its seeds. However, for nutritional and culinary purposes, these foods could be considered vegetables rather than fruits. The nutritional classification of food considers not just botany, but a food's nutrient content, its use in meals, and taste.

The Fruit Group includes botanical fruits that are sweet and/or tart in taste. The Vegetable Group includes those botanical fruits that are not sweet or tart and usually consumed with other vegetables or as a vegetable. Knowing this information, do we classify pumpkin, tomato and avocado as part of the fruit or vegetable group? Both tomatoes and avocados are considered vegetables.

CACFP centers and homes should work with their sponsor or State Agency, as appropriate, when they have questions about the crediting of foods.

The CACFP regulations require that lunch and supper meals contain a serving of vegetables as specified in the meal patterns. A serving of vegetables that contribute to the meal pattern includes:

- fresh vegetables
- frozen vegetables
- dried vegetables
- canned vegetables
- cooked dry beans and peas (legumes)
- full-strength vegetable juice

A second, different vegetable may be served in place of the fruit requirement. Two servings of the same vegetable provided at the same meal do not count as two different vegetables and cannot be served in place of the fruit requirement. For example, two servings of broccoli count as one serving of vegetables and not two different vegetables. Similarly, the same vegetable served in different forms, such as raw carrots and cooked carrots, count as only one serving of vegetable.

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Pumkin Applesauce

- 6 1/4 cups unsweetened applesauce
- 1 (15 oz) can pumpkin puree
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon or more to taste
- 1 tsp ground pumpkin spice
- 12 graham crackers (14 grams each cracker

Place applesauce, pumpkin, vanilla, pumpkin spice and cinnamon in a large bowl. Mix until all is well combined. Scoop 2/3 cup of mixture into a bowl and serve with 1 graham cracker for a complete snack.

One serving credits as 1/2 cup fruit, 1/8 cup vegetable and 1/2 oz eq grains.
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School Readiness Tips for 0-5

The time you spend with your child, or those in your care, can help their brain grow strong. Even a few minutes count! Our partners at Vroom have created these brain-building activities for children ages 0-5 to support school readiness skills like Literacy, Math, Physical Activity, and science.

Literacy- Menu Maker: Involve your children in meal planning. Ask them to choose how to organize the meal. Can they do it by color or group favorites? For example, they could ask other children which dish is their favorite. Then help your child draw or write a menu based on everyone's picks.

Math- Sort & Clean: Encourage your kids to sort objects during cleanup. Talk about what you're doing: "All of the small lids go in the little bowl and the big lids go in the big bowl." Then mix it up and ask them to put the small objects in the big bowl. You can also sort by shape or color.

Physical- At Arm's Reach: Encourage your kids to move and stretch. Put them on their tummy on a blanket on the floor and place a soft, safe object in front of them saying, "Here's your soft bear!" Put it down just out of their reach. Talk about their efforts: "You're working so hard to reach your toy!"

Science- Shake, Bang, and Roll: When your child picks up something safe, encourage them to "Shake, Bang, and Roll!" How many different ways do they explore the object? Talk to them about what they're doing, "You shook the rattle and made a sound."

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